

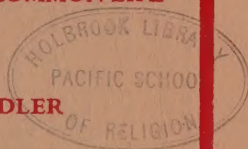
THE

FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON LIFE

EDITED BY

PHILIP MAIRET AND ALEC VIDLER



Special Number on CHURCH and STATE

MARCH 1952

Vol. III No. 3

CHURCH & STATE
IN SWEDEN

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CHURCH & STATE
RELATIONS IN ENGLAND

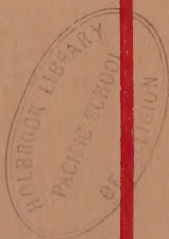
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Published monthly in continuation of
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The Christian News-Letter

Annual Subscription 15s. od.: Single Copies 1s. 3d.

All Correspondence about Subscriptions to the Publisher
BASIL BLACKWELL, 49 Broad Street, Oxford.

All Letters to THE EDITORS to be addressed to
The Frontier, 12 Kingly Street, London, W. 1

*Printed for Basil Blackwell, 49 Broad Street, by The Church Army Press,
Cowley, Oxford.*

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THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE
COMMON LIFE

Vol. III. No. 3.

MARCH 1952

Monthly Letter

A Christian Prince

Archbishop Brilioth, in the course of the address which he has allowed us to publish, said that he was happy to state that the present King of Sweden regards himself as "a Christian Prince". No description could more aptly sum up the character of our own King, George the Sixth, whose death we mourn. He was indeed a "Defender of the Faith", though in a very different style from the Sovereign upon whom that title was first conferred. George VI was a diligent reader of the Bible, like his father, and also of books that he found to illuminate the faith in which his life was grounded, but he made no pretensions to the kind of theological learning which Henry VIII and one or two other English Sovereigns have cultivated. It was in the manner of his life and the stamp of his character that his faith was proved. He walked humbly with his God. He did his duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him; and there is under modern conditions no state of life that makes more exacting, more relentless or more testing demands upon the few who are called to it. He was a dedicated man; but there was nothing ponderous or dour in his dedication. On the contrary, in perilous times he bore the burden of a lonely responsibility, of unremitting hard work, and of a deeply-felt care for all his peoples, with

constant cheerfulness, humour, and courage. These qualities were never more evident than in the way in which he entered and ascended the valley of the shadow of death. They are the qualities of character that his peoples most need in the grave and still perilous days that lie ahead. Just because King George was a man without exceptional natural endowments, the example that he has given to his peoples can speak to them and inspire them all the more powerfully. The sincerity of all the deep emotion that was evoked by the King's death is already being judged in its effects upon the daily conduct of each of his subjects.

Christian Monarchy

To live is to change; and the British monarchy is, by universal consent, as much alive as it has ever been, because it has moved with the times and successfully adapted itself to the process of social change. But that is too impersonal a way of stating what has been above all the personal achievement of the occupants of the throne from Queen Victoria onwards, and none of them has done more to this end than King George VI. The consequence is that the opening of the reign of his daughter, Queen Elizabeth II, falls across our wearisome autumnal forebodings with the invigorating expectations of a spring day. "Elizabethan" is a great word in English history, and we know that it will be our fault, and not the fault of the Queen, if it fails to become a great word again. That depends upon whether as a nation we are moved once again by the spirit of adventure instead of being held down by the lust after security.

Christian monarchy, through all the changes it has undergone, continues to be a sign that rulers as well as subjects are responsible, first and last, not to men but to God from whom all authority in heaven and on earth is derived. The sovereignty that matters most rests not in the people, still less in a temporary majority of the people, but in God and in the majesty of His Law. "The Law of God," as Bishop Berggrav said in his broadcast on February 3rd, "stands

above all human legislation and is not subject to the approval or disapproval of political leaders." Where kings and queens on behalf of their peoples vow their allegiance to God and to the upholding of His Law, there is a promise for the good of the commonwealth and a witness to the sources of its health and freedom that there never would be where a people acknowledged no higher authority than its own will. Monarchy, however, can serve effectually as such a sign only when the allegiance of the monarch to God is known to be sincere and unfeigned. Otherwise it can be used (as too often it has been) to cloak corruption and to hallow the worst kinds of hypocrisy. The present moral influence of the British monarchy depends on the happy fact that its public profession of Christian faith is matched by the personal conviction and practice of the Royal Family. It may be very doubtful whether Britain ought now to be described as a Christian country ; there is no doubt at all where the monarchy stands.

Church and State

The monarchy has never been more unequivocally Christian. From that point of view there is no difficulty about the continued "establishment" of the Church of England. But from other points of view the outward alliance between Church and State appears now to many who have their eyes open to the changed condition of the world as an anomaly or as an unaccountable or discreditable survival. On the one hand, it disguises from the nation the difference between the Christian faith and what a contributor to this number describes as "England's Fourth Religion"; on the other hand, it is widely supposed to hold the Church of England in a position in which no self-respecting church ought to acquiesce and in which it is not free to strike the note of prophetic challenge to the spirit of the age. Ever since the French Revolution the traditional alliance or union between Church and State in the countries of Europe has been called in question on these and on other grounds ;

in some countries it has been terminated, in others it has been largely modified. It will surprise most readers to learn how long the framework of the old order has survived in Sweden, and that changes which were accepted even in conservative England over a century ago have only just been carried through there.

During the nineteenth century churchmen as well as statesmen were increasingly inclined to advocate the separation of Church and State as in the best interests of both. "A free church in a free state" became the slogan of ecclesiastical as well as of political liberals. But the collectivist and totalitarian developments of the present century have caused even the most confident advocates of separation to think again. More is now seen to be at stake than the question of "establishment". "The problem of the relations of Church and State," said J. N. Figgis, "raises topics which go down to the root of all political philosophy, and forces us to face the whole problem of the true nature of civil society and the meaning of personality." The Report of the Church Assembly Commission, which Sir Ernest Barker reviews in this issue, does not attempt to deal with all the aspects of the subject; the Commission was appointed for a restricted purpose. It did not, for instance, find itself required to ask what is the Christian doctrine of the nature of the State; it might be well if theologians who are now-a-days absorbed in studying the nature of the Church would give equal consideration to the nature of the State and of civil society. Until that has been done, it will be premature to draw the permanent lines of a new ecclesiastical settlement.

The Commission was appointed to consider what changes (if any) need to be made here and now in the relations between Church and State in England. It has concluded that only a few minor alterations are immediately needed to enable the Church of England to do its proper work, or rather to remove such legal or constitutional impediments as prevent it from getting on with its proper work. At

the same time, so far from burking, the Commission has gone out of its way to state as forcibly as possible the case for disestablishment or for more radical change. Whether its conclusions are accepted or not, it has presented the arguments on both sides in such a way as to enable citizens as well as churchmen, nonconformists as well as anglicans, to reach an informed judgment upon an issue of great public interest which concerns them all.

INTERIM

Christianity, Ecumenicity, and International Peace

“What I suspect has been and still is largely lacking in the impact of Christianity upon the Christian nation (especially perhaps in Protestant countries) is the distinct awareness that to be a Christian implies not only the attempt seriously to practise the Christian virtues in private life, and in family and civic relations, but also to think, feel, and behave as a citizen of a world community. Ecumenicity is inseparable from genuine Christianity. Perhaps few people *really* believe that. To extend, deepen, and strengthen the belief would be a powerful contribution to the cause of reconciliation among the nations.”

Those who heard Dr. C. H. Dodd deliver his Burge Memorial Lecture last November 13, on *Christianity and the Reconciliation of the Nations*,¹ will recognize those challenging words. We should not know where to look for a better statement in so small a compass of the Biblical justification for the efforts now being made to restore the ecumenical spirit of the churches—or of the dangers by which it is necessarily beset. We cannot resist another quotation:—

“In our situation, while politicians and technicians do their necessary work, the most urgent task, if there is to be effective reconciliation in the future, is that of re-thinking our inherited ideas upon such questions as the true ends of human society, the

¹ Published by the S.C.M. Press, 3s. 6d.

nature and relations of freedom, justice and law, and the true content of human welfare. And here it is the Christian claim that in the Gospel, deeply considered, there reside conceptions still to be explored, suitable for shaping a new community of mankind, and that in the ecumenical fellowship of the Church it should be possible to explore them in relative freedom from the distorting influence of narrowly national traditions."

Germany and European Co-operation

While the February *Frontier* went to press, with Professor Gollwitzer's article against a German contribution to re-armament and our commentary upon it, the same statement was being discussed by the Ecumenical Commission on European Co-operation at Rengsdorf, presided over by Professor André Philip. The number of Germans at this gathering exceeded the total from other nations. In view of the extremely critical phase of West European relations, and the unfortunate predominance of the issue of armament at that moment, the statement of agreed conclusions represents a consolidation on the general issue rather than progress as to ways and means, and it was deemed advisable to issue a list of disagreements—all concerned with the vexing problem of defence. One of the agreed desiderata is that work for European unity should not be an obstacle to the discussions between East and West : but "should go hand in hand with endeavour to improve the basis for such negotiation . . . and with the search for new opportunities to negotiate."

Dr. Niemöller's Visit to Moscow

Among the Germans present at this meeting was Dr. Niemöller, just back from his visit to the Patriarch of Moscow. Contrary to the trend of much public comment, understandable enough in the circumstances, that visit was innocent of any political motive, beyond a hope of doing something to help or expedite the repatriation of German prisoners in Russia, which does not so far appear to have been effectual. And such observations as he was enabled to make, of the present condition of the Churches in Russia, are of great ecumenical interest. These were reported by him during his subsequent visit to London, and in an article in *Réforme* by Mr. Albert Finet who was with him at Rengsdorf.

The number of Moscow churches in which the Orthodox liturgy is offered, reduced at the Revolution from 1,600 to only 21, has risen to

over 60, now filled every Sunday. The present crowded congregations consist mainly of people brought up under the Communist régime, and in the country at large there are 20,000 parishes, supplied from 8 seminaries totalling about 480 students and 2 theological colleges. The officially registered Baptist, Evangelical, and Pentecostal Churches have a membership totalling over 3 millions. The figures confirm general impressions already received in this country. But one of the most interesting developments noted by Dr. Niemöller is the revival of the ministry of preaching, more or less in abeyance in the Orthodox Church since the tenth century. M. Finet sees in this a necessary adaptation to the times. The traditional piety of the Russian Church, sustained by its imagery, hymnology and the celebration of the Sacraments, is being supplemented by a new appeal to the intelligence, in a mental atmosphere entirely altered by the spread of literacy under a materialist dogmatism.

Frontier Luncheon

The last Frontier Luncheon of the present series will be held on Wednesday, April 23rd, at 12.45 p.m. in Queen Mary Hall, Great Russell Street, London, W.C. 1. Mr. Kenneth Grubb, C.M.G., will speak about "Publicity and the Impact of Christianity". Among his many offices, Mr. Grubb is Chairman of the Church Information Board of the Church Assembly and thus is specially qualified to offer guidance about the principles of Christian propaganda and its ways and means. The chair will be taken by Mr. Basil Blackwell. Tickets (3/6) can be obtained from the Christian Frontier, 8 The Cloisters, Windsor Castle.

CHURCH AND STATE IN SWEDEN

*An address by Archbishop Brilioth at a Frontier Luncheon on
February 4th, 1952*

THIS is a large subject and I can do no more than touch upon certain aspects of it. Moreover, it needs to be seen in its historic setting, and that would require a much fuller background than I can supply here.

I will start from a little incident in history. Many of you probably have heard of Bulstrode Whitelocke who was sent as an ambassador by the Commonwealth to Sweden in 1653. A most interesting account has survived of his conversations with Queen Christina, and he was present in Upsala when she abdicated the Crown of Sweden. In a conversation with the then Prince Charles Gustavus, who shortly afterwards became King of Sweden, the Prince said that he had heard of "too much difference of opinion among you in religious matters" and added, "If there be not uniformity among you in those matters, your peace will be endangered." That is illuminating because it shows what unity in religion meant at that time in Sweden. The legal heir to the Swedish Crown was not Gustavus Adolphus, nor his daughter, but it was the Polish branch of the Vasa family who were very keen Roman Catholics; and because of that, to be an R.C. in Sweden in the seventeenth century was really high treason and was punished as such.

Under the influence of Lutheran Orthodoxy that idea of unity in religion, as one of the important principles for the state, was emphasized and assumed a very dogmatic aspect, and, on the whole, there was no greater love for the Calvinists and other Reformed people than for the Roman Catholics. Sometimes the Calvinists were regarded as more dangerous than the R.C.s. The Swedish parish in London, founded in the eighteenth century, then had as its motto: "A rose amongst thorns." This was perhaps not very

complimentary to contemporary Anglicanism, but it is interesting from the historical angle.

The idea of religious unity was clearly expressed in the Church law of Sweden in 1886: "In our Kingdom should all confess only that Christian doctrine and faith which is founded in the whole Word of God expressed in the three principal creeds, the Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed and the Athanasian," and explained in the so-called *Liber Concordiae* which was the whole Lutheran confessional documents.

The idea of the Church and State as really one society with two sides to it was no modern invention. It was a mediaeval idea, taken over, but what is of Protestant origin in it is the idea of the position, the task, and the duty of the King in the society. The Kings of Sweden were never formally declared to be heads of the Church, but the theory was that the King was, as such, the first member of the Church and had certain duties—above all to uphold the Ten Commandments. Those are the two reasons given for the supremacy of the King in the Church. There is one problem in the present situation which is the result of constitutional development. In the seventeenth century, particularly in 1686, when for a time there was absolute monarchy in Sweden, the King meant a Christian prince who really was a Christian and took his duties as protector of the Church quite seriously. In modern times the King has become something rather different. The parliamentary government has taken over the inheritance of the personal Christian King. But that does not mean that the King as a person does not count; he certainly does, and I am happy to say that the present King of Sweden regards himself as a Christian prince.

This idea of the Church and the State as really identical—or at least as one society with two sides—has been gradually weakened during history. It began in the eighteenth century when limited liberty of religion and worship was granted to Anglicans and Reformed in 1741. Then in 1781 we got an act of toleration for foreigners who had settled in the

country, and there was quite a number of foreign merchants settling in Sweden. But that meant only liberty for foreigners; there was no liberty for a Swedish subject to join any other Church. Soon after there was a fairly liberal act of toleration in respect of Jewish communities, who thereby got a reasonably satisfactory status in Sweden.

The most important document, however, is the fundamental law of Sweden of 1809. Here, the Church of Sweden (the Swedish Lutheran Church) remains the State religion because the King and the members of his Councils must be members of the Church, and that also applies to quite a number of other officials of the State, particularly in the teaching profession. On the other hand, there is one paragraph saying that the King must force no man's conscience and he should protect everyone in the lawful exercise of his religion. That is the principle, but a principle which for a long time remained not much more than a principle, and there is much in the history of the nineteenth century of Sweden to be regretted in regard to the cause of religious liberty. At one time, Sweden was rather defamed in Evangelical Alliance circles as a country where religious liberty did not exist. Then gradually the need for a change was recognized, so that in 1860 and 1873 we got the first laws which gave real liberty to citizens to form dissenting communities, which had to be registered, which had certain rights, and to which anybody could go over. These laws had only very limited application, and they were limited in principle as well, because it was still obligatory for a large group of people, e.g. for members of the King's Council, to belong to the Church, and it was still not possible to leave the Church of Sweden unless one entered some other Christian community. One could not go out in order to be a Moslem or just nothing. It was, of course, at that time that Protestant dissent grew to be a rather important force, which has grown since and is perhaps still growing. There is quite a number of Baptists, a few Methodists, and a fairly large group of dissenters. There is the Swedish Mission

Covenant, which has grown up in Sweden but which might be said to be a kind of Swedish congregationalism. The remarkable thing is that only a small part of the dissenters really made use of the law of toleration and organized themselves into societies outside the Church. The majority remained formally within the Church. In 1930, out of nearly 7 million people, there were only 18,000 formal dissenters; the number of real dissenters was 300,000. The number of Roman Catholics is still quite small; at present there are considered to be 15,000, out of which some 10,000 would be foreigners residing in Sweden.

Finally, this year a more definite law of religious liberty has come into effect, though a number of other modifications had previously been made; e.g. from 1908 there was a general right for anyone to contract civil marriage, which had not been possible before. But it is this present law of religious freedom and its implications of which I ought chiefly to speak.

The principle is that full freedom is given for anybody to leave the Church without thereby losing any civic rights whatever, so that one can leave the Church not only in order to join another Church but also just in order to be of no religion. The procedure is that you have to see the parish priest, who will merely ask you to sign a form, and that is the end of it. He should not enter into discussion or try to dissuade those who come for that purpose. The Free Churches have now a better legal position in several ways. The State now can authorize, and will authorize, a certain number of Free Church ministers to perform the marriage ceremony with the same legal effect as marriage by the clergy of the Church. I may add that until now it has been legally prohibited to found monasteries in Sweden; that has been abolished, so that monasteries may now be founded, but the consent of the government is necessary in each case, and it is not likely that we shall have any great number of monasteries.

What effect will this new law have? Would the rectors and vicars on 2nd January find a large queue waiting to sign forms and to leave the Church? There has been a great deal of discussion and agitation from the radical side. The Free Churches have recommended that those who really felt they belonged to a Free Church should make use of the liberty to leave the Church of Sweden. So far, however, there have been no large queues, although it is impossible to say before a year has passed exactly what the effect will be. In a city like Upsala, with some 60,000 inhabitants, during the first month about 100 have left the Church, and we do not anticipate a very large number in the future. It is possible, and perhaps likely, that those who leave the Church will add up to something more than 1 per cent of the whole population. It is unlikely that the number will reach 5 per cent.

This state of things may seem in many ways contradictory. The Church is in close association with the State in many respects—more so than the Church of England. One thing which may seem curious is that the whole system of civil registration is still in the hands of the clergy. This has its roots in history, because it was the Church which first began to register people's births, deaths, etc. It is now a real burden for the clergy, but, on the other hand, it gives them an opportunity to get in touch somehow with a very large number of people resident in their parishes and particularly with those who come in and go out. Automatically, the clergyman is informed about all births and deaths.

The State has control of Church finance, although the Church expenses are not a part of the State budget; there is a separate Church budget which is still controlled by the State. But I cannot embark upon an explanation of our financial system!

The great complexity and formality of the modern state (and Sweden is perhaps more formal than any other state) do produce a great many detailed regulations, and in Sweden these regulations touch the life of the Church more than one

could wish. The clergy are treated in many respects as state officials. We have got from this year a new system for regulating the salaries of the clergy, and this is copied from the system which exists for the civil service and has involved many regulations which we have not really wanted. On the other hand, it gives the clergy a more satisfactory economic position on an equal footing with, say, secondary school teachers and people of that category. Further, I may mention that parsonages in Sweden are now in a better condition than ever before.

In regard to the system of appointments, this is very complicated. I shall confine myself to saying that the parochial clergy are elected by the people but nominated by the diocesan chapter and the State. The diocesan chapter (which in Sweden is the ruling body, with the bishop) furnishes three names for the choice of each parish, out of which the parish selects one. It may be of some interest to know that we have a system of appointing bishops which we (at least the bishops!) think satisfactory; this is a combination of election and nomination, and the three names resulting from election by the diocese are submitted to the King and government, which has to nominate one of these. So far, I think this system has worked well, and there are at present very few clergy in Sweden of whom it is thought they should be bishops and they are not!

The Church Assembly in Sweden has certain legal rights which in some respects are greater than those of the Church Assembly in England. It has a limited right of veto on laws which are definitely Church law, but it is sometimes difficult to say which are definitely Church laws and which are not! All questions of liturgy are regulated through the Church Assembly and the government, but they rarely, if ever, come before parliament. The Church Assembly has the right of petition to the government when it wants certain things undertaken. The Chapter and the Bishop together form the ruling body of the diocese and have the right to take final decisions in a certain number of questions. Here I should

think that there is greater liberty in Sweden than in some other established Churches.

What should one think of the present situation of Church and State in Sweden? We are thinking of ourselves more than before as a Church and are more conscious of the inherent independence of the Church as a Church, and there we have been to a large extent stimulated by contacts with the ecumenical movement and other Churches. In certain quarters there is a growing impatience with State supremacy and much criticism of the present system. Some people advocate entire separation between Church and State, but at present only a minority advocates such a measure—a minority which, I think, is decreasing rather than increasing. The argument from the Free Church or radical side is that those who want to be in the Church should join it; but that is against the fundamental principle of the Church as it has grown up in our country. In the Church there is no general desire to alter the present state of things, and most of us think that the total separation would be a radical and dangerous procedure because the union of Church and State is no new thing. Some people, especially the Americans, find it difficult to understand that to disestablish a Church which has been established for centuries is much more difficult than to remain disestablished where there never was an establishment. The Church and State in Sweden have been on close terms since the middle ages. We fear that separation would involve the exclusion of religious teaching in the schools and might mean that the State would become anti-religious. We value the opportunity, that the present system offers, of reaching all sorts of citizens at some point in their lives. About 90 per cent at least of the children have been baptized and a somewhat smaller percentage is at least instructed for confirmation. Of course, this relation of State and Church involves many anomalies, as do all things which have a historic origin, but I think we have been taught to define it on a religious basis. Some of our greatest theologians have taught us to think of the Church

as a Church not of the State but of the people—as a Church which through its history has a special vocation to proclaim the Gospel to all those who live in the country—and that this Church in its very constitution expresses God's forgiving love and His prevenient grace. We are grateful at least that we have these possibilities, that our children are brought to church and prepared for confirmation, and therefore we are not anxious to draw too sharp a distinction between those who are in the Church and those who are not in the Church. We do not think of the Church so much in terms of membership. We think of it rather as an organism that is continually being built up from the centre, through the means of grace. The centre is there, but it is very difficult to say where the circumference is. We know that the grace of God may have begun its work in many of those who do not now profess the Christian faith, and there are among them those who are nearer the Kingdom of God than many who are anxious to appear as loyal church members. Therefore, we do not wish to effect a break in the relations between Church and State so long as the State does not interfere with the religious ministrations of the Church. We have been taught that it is a healthy condition always to have some friction between Church and State. On the whole, we have good reasons to be thankful for the legal establishment under which we still live.

CHURCH AND STATE RELATIONS IN ENGLAND

The Report of the Church Assembly Commission

IN June, 1949, the Church Assembly appointed a commission of ten members, half clergy, and half laity, under the chairmanship of Sir Walter Moberly, "to draw up resolutions on changes desirable in the present relationship between Church and State and to present them to the Assembly." The Commission has now published an admirably balanced and singularly judicious report, of some seventy pages, which culminates in resolutions, equally balanced and judicious, to be moved this year in the summer session of the Church Assembly. There have been many reports by various committees on the relations of Church and State in the present century. They began with the Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State in 1916, which made with its appendices a large volume of 300 pages. This present report of 1952 has the advantages of brevity, lucidity, point, and moderation. It is informed not only by historical scholarship of a very high order, but also by a notable appreciation of the temper and mode of action natural to Englishmen. Its gist is in favour of tentative experiment, of solutions of the *interim*, of procedure not by logic but rather by what may be called the *pedetemptim* way of "feeling after" a feasible and sensible line of action. This is particularly conspicuous in the section of the report which deals with the control of worship and the possible modifications of the Book of Common Prayer; but it is by no means peculiar to that section. The whole report, which can be read and digested at a sitting, deserves to be widely studied, not only by professing Churchmen, but also by all who are interested in the general life of their community and the general problem of the proper relations between the State and Society. The introduction, contained in some fifteen pages which are as clear

as they are packed with thought, strikes the key-note of the whole, and gives a notable view of the whole contemporary setting, of the general nature and value of the establishment of the Church, of the "grounds for disquiet" which it presents to many and of the "counter-arguments" in its favour which are deeply and sincerely felt by many (indeed very many) others.

The general balance of the report is in favour of establishment. Herein, I cannot but think, it represents the general opinion of the great mass of English Churchmen to-day: indeed I would even go further, and I would say that it also represents the general opinion of Englishmen at large, including many Free Churchmen. It is a comforting thing that a commission at once so scholarly and so largely and so broadly composed—it includes bishops and a dean and a professor of ecclesiastical history, along with members of both Houses of Parliament and one of Her Majesty's judges—should thus hold up the mirror to the opinion of the nation. Two of the arguments advanced in the report deserve particular mention. One of them is that disestablishment would by no means necessarily mean an increase of liberty. On the contrary it might mean not only that one section within the Church might seek to establish a restrictive domination over the rest, but also that the State itself—in the act of disestablishing—might impose new legal restrictions on the disestablished Church. The other argument advanced is even more notable. It is that, as Dr. Döllinger argued as long ago as 1885, the establishment of the Church in England is a matter not only for England, but also for the continent of Europe and indeed the world at large. "The 'disestablishment' of the Church of England would be a shock to opinion throughout the world, because it would be taken as the British [English?] People's deliberate repudiation of a continuous Christian tradition." That sentence invites reflection. I believe it to be profoundly true. We do not live to ourselves alone, and we must not act as if what we did concerned only ourselves.

That is also an admission—or rather a frank confession—made in the course of the Report which should not be left unnoticed. It is an admission, or rather a confession, of the general value of parliamentary control of the Church. “Parliamentary control has in fact operated to prevent each successive school of thought in the Church first from being itself extinguished and later from dominating the others.” In a word Parliament has preserved the breadth and the comprehension which is also the glory (if sometimes also the confusion) of the Church of England. And the reason why it has done so is because, being Parliament, it represents the general opinion of the nation. “It is arguable,” the Commission note, “that, however paradoxically the House of Commons represents the mind of the inarticulate mass of laymen more closely than does the House of Laity [of the Church Assembly] itself.” On the other hand, it is also arguable, and indeed it must be argued, for it is profoundly true, that the Church of England, like all Churches, and indeed like all human societies, must have a power of growth, of self-development, of self-adjustment in a changing world, which is a world of changing and growing thought, to meet new needs and new aspirations. Parliament may have been, and may still be, an engine and instrument of breadth and comprehension. But it may also be, and indeed in some measure it has been, a brake on liberty of self-development. Should not the brake be eased, even while Parliament still continues to be an engine and instrument of breadth and comprehension?

We are thus brought to the easings and relaxations of establishment which are proposed in the report of the commission. They are three. The first relates to the control of worship, or, in other words to the legislative control exercised by parliament in respect of the Book of Common Prayer. A second relates to control of discipline, or in other words to the judicial control exercised by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in respect of Church Courts. The third relates to the appointment of Bishops, or in other

words to the executive control exercised by the Crown, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, in respect of the (nominal) election of bishops by the deans and chapters of cathedrals. Let us look at each of the three in turn.

The easing or relaxation proposed by the Commission in respect of legislative control is that "deviations" from the Book of Common Prayer should be deemed to be lawful if ordered or allowed by the Convocations of Canterbury or York within their provinces, on condition that such ordering or allowing is for optional or experimental use and is neither contrary to nor indicative of any departure from the doctrine of the Church, and provided that (a) the "deviation" is limited to a period of seven or ten years, (b) receives the concurrence of the House of Laity of the Church Assembly, and (c) is supported by a two-thirds majority both in each House of the two convocations and in the House of Laity. This all squares admirably with what was said in the beginning of this article about tentative experiment, solutions of the *interim*, and procedure by the *pedetemptim* way. I see no objection to the methods proposed for the accumulated safeguards. I only deprecate the word "deviation", partly because it is a word of the Communist vocabulary, and partly because it somehow suggests a going astray, or at any rate a going tortuously by "devious" ways.

The easing or relaxation proposed in respect of judicial control is simple. It is the substitution for the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (which anyhow does not work, and is not used, because it is not supported by Church opinion) of a new final court of appeal to be composed of the two Archbishops and of two Communicant members of the Church of England who hold or have held high judicial office. As one who served (I fear very ineffectively) on the 1926 Church Assembly Commission on Ecclesiastical Courts I can only say that this proposal seems to me an improvement, indeed a very great improvement, on the

suggestions made by the Commission of 1926. It is simple, and it is equitable.

The last easing or relaxation proposed (but I ought to explain that I have changed the order of the proposals of the Commission, and that I am putting last, for reasons of my own, a proposal which the Commission themselves put second) is in respect of executive control in regard to the appointment of bishops. Here the Commission seems to me to halt, to face both ways, and eventually to contradict itself. On the one hand, they deprecate any idea of the election of bishops, and come down in favour of the retention of the Crown's right of nomination. On the other hand, and at the same time, not content with the informal advice which is actually given by the Archbishop of Canterbury—and for the Northern Province by the Archbishop of York—to the Crown (that is to say to the Prime Minister) in regard to an appointment, they propose a whole consultative system which runs perilously near to election. Briefly, they suggest that the Archbishops should appoint a Council of three bishops, three clergymen, and three laymen (two of each from the Southern and one from the Northern Province) to advise them from time to time on vacancies; and they further suggest that the Archbishops should invite representatives of the diocese concerned, in which a vacancy has occurred, to confer with this consultative body. I shy away from all this. It magnifies machinery, and turns quiet and confidential conversations into semi-public negotiations. It seems to me to be a way of creating trouble, and not a way of easing or relaxation. I am further bothered by the contradictions which I seem to detect in the whole of the argument. In the first place, there is not to be election, but at the same time there is to be a "consultation" which can only be defended on the ground that it will, in effect, prepare the way for election. In the second place, the Commission argue that "there should be no attempt to diminish the personal responsibility of the Prime Minister for the advice which he gives to the Queen", but having said that they go on to

suggest that there should be an attempt to diminish the personal responsibility of the Archbishop for the advice which he gives to the Prime Minister. (It is true they say that the Archbishop should still retain "final responsibility", but what is his final responsibility if he has behind him a consultative body, and behind that a further consultation of representatives of the diocese concerned?). In the third place, and finally, the Commission, while they would introduce something new into the appointment of bishops, are careful to note that they recommend no change in the appointment of Deans. I cannot quite understand why they make the difference—all the less as they argue that the importance of deans and cathedrals has increased, is increasing and ought to increase further.

I am sorry to end on a note of dissent. I have had some experience of appointments and elections; and all my experience teaches me to trust in a personally responsible Prime Minister advised by a personally (and *individually*) responsible Archbishop. For the rest, I subscribe to the report: I subscribe without reservation, and with unqualified admiration. Above all I am grateful to the Commission for their reasoned and balanced defence of the general cause of establishment. What a pity it would be if the Church should move away from the English State of to-day—a State which, as it showed in the Education Act of 1944, is moved by concern for religion, and the religious education of the children in its schools, so much that it makes the day, in all of these schools, begin with an act of collective worship.

ERNEST BARKER.

NOTE. *Church and State, being the Report of a Commission appointed by the Church Assembly in June, 1949*, is published by the Church Information Board; price 2s. 6d.

ASPECTS OF LIBERTY

A FIGHT ON TWO FRONTS

PROFESSOR E. H. CARR in his recent broadcast talks, published under the title, *The New Society*, spoke of the French revolution as a turning point in history, inasmuch as it made universal liberty the goal of human endeavour. He added that the makers of the revolution did not know what this meant, and that we have been trying to find out ever since. Events have made it clear that we must make up our minds quickly if catastrophe in one form or another is to be avoided. It is consequently hardly surprising, and something to be thankful for, that three substantial works on the subject of liberty by distinguished authors should have appeared practically simultaneously in the first half of last year.¹

Though all three books are the result of long and deep reflection, the primary interest of the authors is not intellectual but practical. They have been driven to write, not by an academic interest in the meaning of freedom, but by a lively apprehension of the seriousness of the present predicament of mankind. All three agree in asserting that false doctrines of liberty are leading the world to destruction, that the danger is acute, and that nothing can avert it but a new outlook and attitude involving a transformation of human nature.

The Logic of Liberty is made up of essays written on various occasions and in various contexts during the past eight years. Many who have followed Polanyi's work during that period have been impressed by the clarity of his purpose and by his qualities as a fighter. Collected in book form the essays present a consistent and impressive view of the human predicament.

¹ Michael Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty*, Routledge; Karl Mannheim, *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning*, Routledge; Patrick Gordon-Walker, *Restatement of Liberty*, Hutchinson.

A clue to his interpretation of it is given in his remark that future historians may conceivably look on the Italian elections of 1946 as a turning-point in history. The defeat then inflicted on the Communists by a large Catholic majority was hailed with immense relief by the defenders of liberty throughout the world, including many who had been brought up under Voltaire's motto *Ecrasez l'infâme* and had in earlier days voiced all their hopes in that battle-cry. It appears to Polanyi that "on the day when the modern sceptic first placed his trust in the Catholic Church to rescue his liberties against the Frankenstein monster of his own creation, a vast cycle of thought had come full swing. The sphere of doubt had been circumnavigated."

The present downfall of liberty is due in Polanyi's view to the fact that its modern formulation contained a fatal flaw. Modern liberalism had its roots in a detestation of religious fanaticism. In the Anglo-Saxon world its chief exponents were Milton and Locke. Milton's great plea was for freedom of discussion as a means of discovering truth; in essence it was anti-authoritarian. Locke's doctrine was based on philosophic doubt; it asserted that we can never be so sure of truth in the matter of religion as to justify us in imposing our views on others.

In the Anglo-Saxon world these doctrines were not pushed to extremes. They were held in leash by two protective influences. The first was the strength of the religious tradition. The tolerance which sought equal rights for all religions was not extended to irreligion. Locke expressly excluded atheists from its scope. A scepticism which was in the main indisposed to undermine ultimate religious belief was not likely to address itself seriously to destroying fundamental moral principles. The other important factor in Anglo-Saxon development was the relatively early establishment of democratic institutions through which the moral principles that are the life-blood of a free society became part and parcel of the experience and practice of ordinary men and women.

On the Continent of Europe these protective influences were not present in the same degree. Continental liberalism lacked the support of an equally powerful religious and civic tradition. A radical scepticism grew up which assailed the foundations not only of religion but also of morality. The intellectual basis of universal standards of reason and of human behaviour was undermined. The inner inconsistency of a liberalism based on philosophic doubt was laid bare. It became apparent that, when doubt is extended to the field of traditional ideals, freedom of thought itself disappears, and that "no grounds are left on which any individual may justly make a stand against the rulers of the day".

The prime necessity, therefore, according to Polanyi, is to recover belief in fundamental values. That alone will preserve mankind from destruction. "We are living in the midst of a period requiring great re-adjustments. One of these is to learn once more to hold beliefs, our own beliefs. The task is formidable, for we have been taught for centuries to hold as a belief only the residue which no doubt can possibly assail. There is no such residue left to-day, and that is why the ability to believe with open eyes must once more be systematically acquired."

Sincere beliefs are in essence commitments, and it is only by making such commitments that we are able to live at all. Beliefs are prior to liberties; they are their foundation and guarantee. It is because we believe in the power of thought, in reason and in truth, that we value freedom of thought. It is belief in justice that makes us desire freedom for all. It is an initial commitment to a free society that impels us to establish and maintain the liberties necessary to its existence and to the expression of its life. It is consequently our duty, if we believe in freedom, to oppose and attack the widely accepted philosophy which asserts, explicitly or by implication, that justice is nothing but the will of one section, that there is nothing higher than the longing for material benefits, and that appetite and force are the ultimate realities in

human affairs. The defenders of liberty to-day are confronted by opponents far more formidable than those against whom it achieved its first victories.

Karl Mannheim sees things in much the same way as Polanyi. The question which engaged his whole mind in the later part of his life was how a free society can maintain itself as such in a scientific and technological age in which the control and planning of social forces have become inevitable. His major work was nearly, but not quite, completed at the time of his death and has been edited by two of his old students with the help of his widow. It embodies the results of many years of thought and research. No justice can be done in this article to the wealth of material it contains.

Mannheim, no less than Polanyi, saw plainly that a free society depends in the last resort on ultimate beliefs. The third and final section of his book—in length nearly half of the whole—bears the title “New Men—New Values”. The concluding chapter deals with the integration of the social order. The question of what ultimately holds society together has always, Mannheim insists, been one of the most profound questions that confront the sociologist. It assumes peculiar importance in a period of rapid and revolutionary change. In spite of this it has largely been ignored by modern sociologists. They have been inclined to take it for granted that integration will occur spontaneously. There have been periods in which the influence of religion, tradition and custom have been so powerful that the problem of integration could be safely disregarded. But that is certainly not true to-day.

“We have learned,” Mannheim tells us, “from the chaos through which we have passed that certain things must remain exempt from doubt, even if only for a while.” In his earlier book, *Diagnosis of our Time*, he had insisted that a free society can survive only as a *militant* democracy. It is essential to a free society *both* that there should be agreement about certain fundamental values *and* that outside this

common unifying bond other questions should be open to free debate. Only if certain basic beliefs are held in common is it possible to pursue together the search for truth. Mannheim is as clear about this as Polanyi.

He is in broad agreement also with Polanyi about the forces in our present society which are undermining all beliefs. Thought, he perceives, fulfils a dual purpose in human life. It is, on the one hand, a means of finding facts and an instrument of theoretical analysis. It is, on the other hand, a means of relating ourselves to the claims of other persons and adjusting ourselves to practical living. It is only recently that we are beginning to see the fundamental difference between the two processes. Science is, and ought to be, neutral. It has no concern with persuasion, but "society cannot live without persuasion". It is no longer to-day the obscurantist who is alarmed about the effects of the dissemination of knowledge, but the educator. He sees the disastrous consequences of the dissolution of the basic images by which life is guided and the danger to "the core of our everyday experience and the light in which we move and co-operate". The same difficulty presents itself to the politician. Science demands the open mind and suspension of judgment. Action, and especially collective action, calls for clear-cut unambiguous assertions that leave no room for uncertainty and hesitation.

There are thus at work in society two contradictory forces. There is, on the one hand, the pressure of organized thought, of which Marxism is the outstanding example, i.e. of a rigid system of ideas with ready-made answers to all questions. The tendency of organized thought is towards increasing organization until a state of petrification is reached and the spirit of enquiry is crushed out of existence. On the other hand, there is at work also the opposite tendency towards a complete scepticism in which "intellectuals renounce any enduring frame of reference and tend towards a kind of fathomless existence". The human being is torn between these two tendencies. For him "the

artificial certainties of dogma are often the only refuge from the challenge of eternal uncertainties ”.

Another characteristic of the modern age is the debunking attitude. It has been powerfully fostered by Marxism and by the teachings of Freud, but it exerts an influence far beyond the professed adherents of these doctrines. It creates distrust in a particular attitude by discovering hidden reasons or unconscious motives for its adoption. It has thus in far-reaching ways added to the fundamental uncertainty of our time. Another force working in the same direction is the discovery and use of new techniques for manipulating thought and feeling. The difficulty of distinguishing what is genuine from what is faked produces a fundamental distrust towards everything and leads to a psychological and spiritual insecurity that may be even more disturbing than economic and social insecurity.

To overcome these forces of disintegration something is needed that will provide orientation and direction. For this, in Mannheim's view, we must look to religion. "There exist some archaic patterns in the human mind and in the nature of human action that lead to the quest for certainty and deeper foundations." Unless there is in the universe a meaning and a love in which man can trust, life can hardly be lived. Only through the satisfaction of these deep-rooted aspirations "can man develop the sense of belonging in a world where he can find his place and where there is an order that supports him and dispels his anxieties." In his earlier book Mannheim had shown that from the point of view of the sociologist there is not as a rule only one possible adjustment to a given situation but many conceivable adjustments. The choice between these is determined not by the given facts but by what Mannheim called a "paradigmatic" experience, i.e. by a fundamental experience of what is felt to be the ultimate meaning of life.

Mr. Gordon-Walker's analysis of the situation reaches similar conclusions. For him too society is in mortal crisis. There can be no more important knowledge, he holds, for

a society or civilization than the knowledge whether or not it is in mortal crisis. The roots of the present crisis lie in a false doctrine of liberty resulting from a mistaken conception of man. The thought of Locke and of Marx, the parents respectively of the liberal and the totalitarian State, proceeds from the same basic assumptions. There is no hope of escape from the dilemma of liberty unless we break with these assumptions. That means that we must recognize clearly the limits of science and of the scientific approach to reality. Like Polanyi and Mannheim, Mr. Gordon-Walker is convinced that "it is the abandonment of morality that constitutes the fundamental treason of the intellectuals". The root fallacy of the way of looking at things that has been dominant since Descartes is that it can find no real place in man for evil. The great mistake has been to take for granted that man can build heaven on earth. It is wrong to suppose that the doctrine of original sin is one of pessimism or despair. Awareness of evil is what raises man above the level of the animals. Evil can be contended with only if it is recognized as existing. Men must give up dreaming of a perfect society. They must dedicate themselves to the task of achieving a *better* society. They must realize that the only way in which they can achieve it is by becoming better men.

This view is supported by a long, sustained and impressive argument. Its effect is a little impaired by the author's too free use of the catchword "Cartesianism", on which he rings the changes on page after page until it becomes wearisome. It will also appear to some readers that, just as Hegel thought that history had reached its goal in the Prussian State, so Mr. Gordon-Walker, in spite of his insistence on the need for radical change, inclines a little to suggest that the solutions of profound questions which he raises are already in sight, and that the socialist Britain of the past quinquennium is on the road to achieving them.

While all three writers see plainly that a doctrine of liberty which acknowledges no limits or restraints must lead

to the destruction both of itself and of society, none of them would be willing to return to any form of authoritarianism. In looking to religion as the main integrating force in society Mannheim insists that it must be a religion free from all traces of authoritarianism and explicitly rejects any form of clericalism and a superimposed creed. The fight for liberty for all the three writers we are considering is a fight on two fronts. The war has to be waged at one and the same time against an imposed orthodoxy and against a scepticism which would dissolve all beliefs.

The conclusion to which we are led is that the fundamental issue that confronts mankind to-day is the choice between three attitudes which may be described by the words autonomy, heteronomy, and theonomy. The difference between these attitudes is one of the main themes of Paul Tillich's *The Protestant Era*, the English edition of which was published simultaneously with the three volumes under review. Autonomy for Tillich is the attitude of man's self-sufficiency which cuts the ties between a civilization and its ultimate ground, so that it becomes progressively exhausted and spiritually empty. Heteronomy is, in contrast, the attempt of a religion to dominate cultural activity from outside. To this modern man will not consent. Theonomy is the name for a culture in which the ultimate meaning of existence shines through all finite forms of thought and action.

For all these writers we stand at a turning-point in history. At the beginning of the modern period western man set out to assert his freedom from all controls which imposed restraints on his resolve to explore the universe and to subdue nature to his purposes. He addressed himself to the task of creating a culture in the light of his own reason and his own desires. The results of his ambition are now becoming apparent and all the writers we are considering are alarmed by them. We see the consequences which follow when men acknowledge no meaning in the universe that is not of their own making, no truth beyond their own truth,

no binding obligation, no imperative which they must unconditionally obey. Yet mankind, having tasted freedom, will not again return to tutelage. It will not submit to external restraint. The question has, moreover, to be faced and answered, whether the desire of men to take on their own shoulders the responsibility for shaping their life and destiny, and to exercise the freedom that it involves, is not after all in keeping with the essential Christian conception of man. If that is so, what we have to look for, if there is to be a future for mankind, is the breaking into life of a new theonomy, in which men become increasingly aware of being at every point in their lives in relation to a truth which is unconditionally binding on them because it is the ultimate and innermost truth of their own being. There is no necessary incompatibility between such an understanding of theonomy and belief in the reality of divine revelation.

What in this situation, it may be asked, are we to do practically? The answer cannot be given in an article, since it must vary with the different circumstances of a host of individuals engaged in an almost endless variety of different activities. The vast range of the tasks that need to be undertaken in the political and educational fields is made plain in Mannheim's book. No more pertinent suggestion of the place where each of us may begin could be offered than the one made by Sir Arthur fford in the address which was printed in the June issue of *The Frontier*. If the root of our present troubles is the prevalence of false beliefs or the loss of all beliefs, the first task is to challenge this state of mind wherever we encounter it. Sir Arthur fford called this "Encounter with Doubt", and he suggested that those who take advantage of the day-to-day opportunities to spread a personal and individual change of attitude can set in motion a "chain-reaction" which may have incalculable results.

J. H. OLDHAM.

ENGLAND'S FOURTH RELIGION

NOTE.—The following article is written with certain obvious limitations. For one thing it has in mind conditions in one part of semi-rural England. No doubt things are different in other places. But more than this, it is written from the standpoint of the Anglican Church only; for it is maintained that that Church has an especial responsibility both for the existence of the "religion" described, and for the thin tie that still holds it to the established church.

It is certain that the free Churches in England have a vital part to play also in any thorough-going Christian approach to this important group of English folk. Probably it can only be made together. But what that approach should be, and how it should be related to this Anglican "connection", are subjects which require a quite different study.

THE mourners slide uneasily into the cemetery chapel, and are shown into the side seats by the frock-coated undertaker. The bearers go outside to wait in the sun. The undertaker shuts the door after them, and takes his place on the cross-bench. The family crouches with foreheads firmly pressed against the rail in front. Is not that what one does in Church?

The priest looks at his queer recumbent congregation. "The nineteenth psalm," he announces hopefully. A few faces look up puzzled. "On page seven of your service books," he explains. There is a general upheaval to recover the booklets they are sitting on. No one stands, and he leaves them alone.

"But who regardeth the power of thy wrath; for even thereafter as a man feareth, so is thy displeasure.

"So teach us to number our days: that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

The Lesson follows with its lofty argument for the new spiritual body of those who are in Christ. . . . "Let us pray," says the priest. "Who also hath taught us, by His holy Apostle Saint Paul, not to be sorry, as men without

hope, for them that sleep in Him." So the service goes on in austerity and profound Christian theology.

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What does it signify to the group in whose ears hardly half the words are fully understood? Is it all just a dreadful pretence, a phoney religion, like the horrible "chapel" in which they are meeting? Is it a hypocritical piece of dead convention that perhaps these very men have mocked at in the workshop among their mates?

So one might be excused for thinking. But the minister looks at it all with more charity and sympathy.

He recognizes this little group. He knows that they are adherents of a religion, of that pathetic Fourth Religion, which has more followers in this England than any of the three generally recognized forms of Christianity. They must outnumber by three to one those who are decisively attached to the Established Church, and by the same proportion the adherents of all the Free Churches. There are thirty-six "denominations" listed in the World Christian Handbook as holding out their hands of welcome to the inhabitants of this island. But these religionists do not belong to any of them. They also equally decisively reject those who reject Christianity. In a national census they will call themselves "Church of England"; but in truth they are adherents of this Fourth Religion.

* * * * *

The Anglican priest meets the adherent of this religion at such a service as this. He will see him again in the parish church when one of his children is to be baptized, or at a family wedding. Why does he, against the spirit of many of his class, call himself a Churchman, and keep this modicum of connection with its offices?

The reasons for this mustard-seed of allegiance are wrapped up with the tenets of his faith. The established Church is English, and that is a word that he believes in. Moreover, the Church of England does not worry him

unduly. He has a certain respect for those sects which frown on some of his habits—for there is a strain of Puritanism in his religion—but he will not join them. He does not like to be told that Sunday amusement, or beer, or a flutter at the races, are wrong. True, the Church of England does put great store by the baptism of children. But that he also wants. It gives the little chap a serious start in life, and it brings the family straightaway into his life. The Church is all against divorce. That is hard sometimes ; but on the whole he is all for family loyalty. What he remembers of the Ten Commandments has his solid approval, at least in theory.

Then he feels vaguely glad that there is a parish church, and a parish priest, in the background, just as he is glad there is a policeman and a schoolteacher. And he does not want to trouble any of these necessary functionaries unless he has to. Perhaps there is a family grave near the church, which one of his women-folk, with his approval, will visit occasionally. So on the whole nothing that he knows about the Church of England is irksome to him, and much of its machinery fits easily into his religion.

* * * * *

But having gone so far, what prevents him from coming right into this Church, on the skirts of which he thus keeps a hand ? Force of habit is one thing. His grandfather went to church regularly in his employer's train, as part of social order and decency. His father broke away sullenly from this feudal position. He himself has lost nearly all the ill-will his father had towards the Church. But he still feels that on the whole the regular services are for those who feel like that. And he can't see that there is any sufficient gain to be got from occupying his Sunday that way to warrant so radical a break with his habits. He has met a few keen churchgoers, but he is not much impressed. Perhaps his wife timidly suggests a visit to a church. But she does not feel much either way, and it does not go far.

Another thing is the deposit at the bottom of his mind of ill-understood arguments against Christianity. One or

two of his mates are clever fellows, and the arguments they trot out sound good enough, and there was no one there to say any thing different. There may be answers, but the few times he has heard the parson preach, what he said was off the point so far as his interests are concerned, and it seems to him that the creed is pretty far-fetched.

But, most of all, he leaves the Church alone because he has a religion which suits himself and his wife pretty well. Like Communism it is limited to this world. For himself, he believes in his trade and skill, and values them. He knows it is right to do his duty by the country in an emergency. He is a good mate, and believes in being loyal to the group he belongs to. He believes in keeping his house and garden trim. He is a considerate husband, and earns the respect as well as the affection of his children. He does not care for gossip, and sometimes speaks sternly to his wife about this. He feels rather dumbly that there is another side to most questions, and turns away from hot-headed fanatics. Rather shyly too he has a certain taste in good books, and is beginning to discriminate in the music he hears on the wireless. Discrimination in pictures has not yet begun, and the pictures on the walls of his home are without significance.

His wife is a good neighbour, ready to give a hand when there is sickness near by, or to mind another woman's baby at times. She goes further than her husband, and perhaps attends the Mothers' Union once a month. She rather likes the simple prayers they use there, and uses them herself at night. She probably teaches her children a prayer for bedtime, and encourages them to go to Sunday school and the boys to join the choir. She loves the hymns' period on the Light Programme.

On the whole they are a likeable couple, dependable, with a sense of values, and they are loyal to their religion. And the majority of the English people are of this persuasion.

With its apparent self-sufficiency, this religion is of course in a desperately weak position, and is a precarious poise for

the human soul in its eternal pilgrimage. The slightest emergency upsets it. It is pathetically unable to answer the questions that the smallest child asks so persistently ; nor can it indicate any place where such answers may some day be found. It is helpless in the presence of inevitable disasters which beset the family—death, disloyalty, shame. It can kindle no enthusiasm in growing youth. It provides no person and no place where worship or thanksgiving, penitence or supplication, may be offered. No one can grow in such a religion. It is apt to turn into pride and smugness.

In smooth days it may hold its ground, and when its only opponent is a still emptier philosophy of indifference. It soon gives way when it is faced by any determined alternative. In the South of England the challenge of Communism has hardly yet been felt. But it seems, from the deteriorating moral life, that the youth of this generation has already prepared itself to leave it.

The question is whether this "Fourth Religion" would succumb to a serious challenge by the Church when she is fully alive to her message of the Word and the Sacrament. Or is this one of those post-Christian religions, which by a slight attack has become immune to a full Christian faith? The answer to this seems to be that it is susceptible to a considerable degree to Christian propaganda. These two vital principles of a Christian offensive—the Word and the Sacraments—are in reality totally new to the adherents of this shadow-faith. They have never known them in any shape, and when they become the central things in a local church, and lead to a vivid community life, they come as a complete novelty.

* * * * *

Christianity has all the best cards in this game of winning a new generation of fourth religionists. She has the secret of true community, free from sentimentality. Her message is not tied to the inessential things which this generation is busy discarding. She knows how to merge the lesser loyal-

ties which mean so much to simple people in the larger loyalties that our nation must find or perish. Worship and praise are central to her purpose, with all that they mean for a synthesis of creative activity and gaiety. She has a faith in which science and the arts are essential handmaids. The Scriptures discovered afresh have that dramatic quality and that unity and relevance that bring them at once to the centre of this generation's attention.

But if this great group of our countrymen is to be seriously challenged and won for its true mother, the Church, that Church must see it with loving and sympathetic eyes which are not without tears. For she must see it as the product of her own sin and negligence in past generations.

HERBERT W. NEWELL.

REVIEW

Way to Wisdom. An Introduction to Philosophy, by Karl Jaspers. Gollancz, 10s. 6d.

In the *News Chronicle* for January 5th, 1952, there appeared the following item of news :—

“Two gangsters, described by police as Left Bank existentialists, entered a bank in a Paris suburb to-day, grabbed £9,000 in notes and got away in a 1924-model car which they had to crank up before it would start.

“One gangster wore a pink bow tie, the other had hair curling over his collar.

“Existentialists (philosophic mentor : Jean-Paul Sartre) hold that man must by his own acts free himself from the brutalities of his environment.”

The last paragraph is most interesting. We shall probably never know the course of the deductions which led the French police to blame the existentialists ; but the correspondent of the *News Chronicle* was on the right track : it is a main tenet of the existentialists that in the flux and

chaos, impersonality and brutality, in modern mass society, the philosopher wishes to rise superior to his surroundings, and attempts to do this in the strength of something other than his single and unaided power.

Whether the long-haired and the pink-bowed gangsters of the Left Bank saw all that Professor Jaspers sees in the modern situation is, however, a subject of legitimate doubt. Furthermore, Monsieur Sartre, while he cannot be held responsible for the abstraction of those bulky wads of bank-notes by his dubious devotees, can at least be questioned from a polite distance about the depth of his understanding of traditional existentialism. I have no doubt that his morality of expediency and subjectivism can be rapidly demolished by any serious moral philosopher ; but such a demolition would still leave the devotees at large. In other words, existentialism in its fashionable Parisian form represents a mood about modern life ; in the work of Jaspers it represents both a tradition and an instrument. It is part of the honourable tradition of philosophy which has persisted since the days of Thales. In this book of radio talks Jaspers is faithful to the tradition in the sense that he does introduce his readers to some of the main philosophical problems as these have gradually taken shape. God, Man, the World, History, the Philosophical Life, are among the themes handled, and there is a useful appendix on reading philosophy. But this is all done from the angle of Jaspers' own philosophy, which he is acutely conscious comes at the end of the tradition, in the midst of the modern predicament. Philosophy for him is also an instrument for living, and there are passages in this book in which the tradition and the life strike one another, and light up for a moment the darkness of the contemporary scene.

It is not a book which can be readily described in a brief review. Its merit as an introduction to one of the latter-day existentialists is also its defect as an introduction to philosophy. It does show clearly how the fruitful course of existentialist philosophy depends on the strength of its connection with the past ; but as an introduction to philosophy it is too much involved in the terms and categories of Jaspers' own philosophy to lead the novice very smoothly into the main stream. But anyone who is prepared for heavy going will find this book exciting. It is clear that the true appeal of existentialist philosophy, especially on the Continent, lies in the kind of gallant attempt made by Jaspers to face the actual situation of men's lives, of fear, and confusion. In this country, on the other hand, I suppose that the attraction

of Jaspers' thought lies first of all in the promise he offers of rehabilitating philosophy, and drawing it away from the realm of an esoteric game with words. It is even possible that in due course the traditional philosophizing of the universities may be affected by the obscure succession dominated by the names of Hamann, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Jaspers. Of these four only the works of Kierkegaard have appeared *in toto* in English; of the others only minor work (like the present book) or nothing at all (as with Hamann) is so far available in English.

RONALD GREGOR SMITH.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

TWILIGHT OF EMPIRES

SIRS,

At the conclusion of your admirably fair comments on my article in the *Fortnightly* entitled "England as an Ex-World Power", you ask me to look into my conscience so as to make sure that my case against the reality of the Commonwealth has nothing to do with the sorrows of the Dutch Empire.

The suggestion could not be more pertinent. For in all honesty I am bound to admit that, much as I love and admire this country—and I would not really live anywhere else—I cannot always entirely repress a certain feeling of "Schadenfreude" at its decline of power. It is not, however, resentment at the loss of the Dutch Empire which inspires this base sentiment. It is rather a question of taking pleasure in the spectacle of pride coming before a fall, that boastful contemptuous pride exemplified in Kipling's lines about "the lesser breeds without the law", and which still so often characterizes John Bull's utterances. I say this not to excuse myself nor to defend myself by attacking but only to explain why I plead guilty to your charge. For guilty I am.

Yours faithfully,

J. H. HUIZINGA.

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